

Subject: Municipal Census 2020**APPROVALS:****Annette Antoniak**_____
Director_____
Chief Administrative Officer**Recommended Motion:**

THAT the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo conduct a Municipal Census in 2020 and;

THAT the Mayor be authorized on behalf of Council to send a letter to the Minister of Municipal Affairs requesting that the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo be authorized to include the shadow population in the 2020 Municipal Census.

Summary:

A Municipal Census is required in 2020 to ensure that the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) maintains full access to per capita grant funding from the provincial and federal governments. The goal of the Municipal Census 2020 is to update the official population figures, including both the permanent and shadow populations.

The results of the 2018 Municipal Census show that the population of the region has decreased in recent years. To monitor these changes, it is necessary to conduct a count of the population of the region at regular intervals to provide relevant and timely information about the population.

The detailed demographic information collected is valuable to municipal departments, businesses, not-for-profit organizations, schools, utilities, emergency services, Alberta Health Services and Alberta Human Services for planning in our communities.

For a municipal census to be conducted, Alberta Municipal Affairs requires Council authorization by resolution.

Background:

The Municipality conducts a census every two to three years. The most recent census was conducted in 2018. The municipal census is governed by the *Municipal Government Act Determination of Population Regulation*. It stipulates that a census must be conducted between April 1 and June 30 of the same year and that the results

must be submitted to Alberta Municipal Affairs by September 1 of that year.

April 1, 2020 is recommended as the census day and reference point of enumeration. Every person living or working within the Municipality's boundaries on that day are eligible and must be enumerated to get an accurate count of the population.

Completing a census in the municipality poses many challenges owing to the geographic size of the region, hiring and retaining of enumerators, the composition of the workforce including those who travel in and out of the municipality and those who work long shifts. These, and many other challenges, must be overcome to achieve the desired goal and objectives of the census. Past experience and recommendations from Census 2018 will be utilized to mitigate the unique challenges of conducting a census in the region.

The enumeration process will count all persons within the RMWB including the Urban Service Area, the rural communities and project accommodations. Three methods of enumeration will be used, which include self-enumeration (online), door to door interview, and telephone interview. Should Council approve a census in 2020, Administration will work to achieve high response rates and awareness with the public about the importance of the census.

The Census team will collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to enumerate the population in project accommodations and help to engage the public on the importance of the census through awareness and education. Strong collaboration with various stakeholders will help to improve enumeration in rural communities and multi-family dwellings in the Urban Service Area. However, enumerating the residential shadow population in the Urban Service Area (mobile workers and people who share rooms and suites in single family homes) will continue to be a challenge.

Budget/Financial Implications:

The Municipal Census funding will be captured in the 2020 Operating Budget based on Council approval. The proposed budget for the Census in 2020 is \$780,000. The budget includes hiring and paying enumerators, temporary staff, training, advertising, supplies, mailing, online data collection and technical support. All expenses related to Census 2020 will be tracked and reported.

Provincial and federal grants are provided to municipalities annually. The Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) grant (which includes the Basic Municipal Transportation Grant (BMTG)), and the Gas Tax Fund (GTF) are allocated primarily based on the official population count including the shadow population.

The official 2018 population count for the RMWB is one of the components used to estimate these grants, and thus, the RMWB was allotted for the following interim amounts in 2019:

- MSI (capital component) estimated at \$45.72 per capita or a total of \$5.10 million;

- MSI (BMTG component) estimated at \$53.09 per capita or a total of \$4.14 million;
- Gas Tax Fund estimated at \$58.18 per capita or a total of \$6.49 million;
- Gas Tax Fund-Top up (one-time disbursement) estimated at \$54.81 per capita or a total of \$6.12 million.

The Gas Tax Fund-Top up is a one-time additional payment to the 2019 funding.

Rationale for Recommendation:

There are significant financial implications to the Municipality in conducting a census, not only in terms of grant funding, but in relation to improvements in municipal infrastructure and capital projects. Accurate and up to date population data is critical for projects and initiatives, and municipal programs aimed at improving economic growth and social conditions for the residents in the region.

Should Council authorize Administration to conduct a census in 2020, including an updated count of the shadow population, a request would then be submitted to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for approval to enumerate the shadow population as part of the Municipal Census 2020.

Strategic Priorities:

Responsible Government
Regional Economic Development